

News Release



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Contacts:
Pati Brown
916-417-1159
Traci Rockefeller Cusack
916-213-4373

Railroad Museum Debuts New Exhibit “Common Diversions: Toy Trains and Scale Model Railroads” on November 3

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – To the delight of rail enthusiasts of all ages, the California State Railroad Museum will debut a new exhibit titled “Common Diversions: Toy Trains and Scale Model Railroads” on November 3, 2011. While the items on special display will all be miniature in size, the goal of the exhibit is to clearly distinguish the big differences between scale models and toy trains, both of which have unique characteristics and avid collectors.

In addition to the Railroad Museum’s popular “Small Wonders: The Magic of Toy Trains” exhibit and in contrast to the impressive collection of 21 full-size meticulously restored locomotives and cars on display throughout the Museum, visitors will soon have a unique opportunity to learn more about the decidedly smaller end of the spectrum. As guests will learn, the difference between model trains and toy trains has to do with scale.

“Model trains are built to scale with a specific size relationship between the model and its real life prototype,” explained the late Thomas W. Sefton in a descriptive publication titled *Sefton American Collections*. “Toy trains, in contrast, are not made to scale. They are crafted with color and imagination rather than an attempt at perfect realism.” (Mr. Sefton collected more than 7,000 toy trains during his lifetime; many are displayed at the Museum today in the “Small Wonders” exhibit.)

Toy trains are miniature versions of their bigger counterparts that were designed as toys for children. Today, many participants in this hobby are interested in building layouts or collecting treasured playthings. One popular line of accessories, “Plasticville,” is a line of snap-together toys introduced the late 1940s and both an early village scene and a rural scene -- complete with cars, people and animals -- will be on display as part of the exhibit. Conversely, model railroad enthusiasts tend to be keenly focused on the accuracy of virtually all details of their models. Visitors will see and appreciate a selection of brass scale model locomotives and cars, showcased on mirrored pedestals that accentuate their jewel-like qualities and intricate details.

“Common Diversions: Toy Trains and Scale Model Railroads” will remain on special display in the Museum’s Lobby Gallery through September 14, 2012. For more information about “Common Diversions,” visit www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org or call (916) 445-6645.

About the California State Railroad Museum

Operated by California State Parks with financial assistance from the non-profit California State Railroad Museum Foundation, the California State Railroad Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day. Widely regarded as North America’s finest and most popular railroad museum, the complex of facilities includes the 100,000-square foot Railroad History Museum plus the reconstructed Central Pacific Railroad

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Passenger Station and Freight Depot, 1849 Eagle Theatre, and Big Four and Dingley Spice Mill commercial buildings in Old Sacramento. For 24-hour information, visit www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org or call (916) 445-6645.

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